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▷BOOK ❖ NOTICES.◀

VATKE'S OLD TESTAMENT INTRODUCTION.*

In 1835, Wilhelm Vatke published his *Religion des Alten Testaments*, one of the first works in which was broached the theory now known by the name of Graf, Kuenen or Wellhausen. This maiden effort was so saturated with Hegelian philosophy as to be almost incomprehensible to the uninitiated, and Prof. Reuss himself holding the same theory of the Pentateuch, confesses that he was unable to read the book. On account, possibly, of the cold reception met by this work, Vatke gave up authorship almost altogether, and although he continued to lecture in Berlin until his death (1882), he published very little. We now receive from one of his pupils his lectures on "Old Testament Introduction."

A comparison with the earlier work shows some remarkable changes. The Hegelian terminology which makes the earlier work almost unreadable has disappeared. The style is now clear and simple. A transcendental philosophy nowhere shows itself. We have the common sense almost commonplace view of things which we expect to find in a work of this kind. The author begins with a definition and a brief history of the science. He then takes up general introduction, treating first of the people of Israel and the Semites in general. A second chapter treats the Hebrew language; a third, the Hebrew alphabet. The canon and text are then taken up including the history of the printed text. A history of Old Testament exposition concludes this first part. The special introduction takes up the books in their usual order. About forty pages at the end are given to the Apocrypha.

I have said the transcendental philosophy of the earlier work nowhere shows itself. This statement must be modified so far as to admit the following statement which is purely speculative. "The Hebrew principle first stepped into life by prophets as organs of revelation. The earlier theological order of stand-points in the Old Testament which put the law first, the prophetic order next, is to be exactly reversed. The first stand-point of revelation *can be only* the prophetic, while all legal definitions, and the objective view involved in them, embody an application of the already existing principle to the actual world." This is, to be sure, a serious matter, and lays the author open to the charge freely made against his earlier book, that it is constructed *a priori*. But this is the only instance in which the principle is distinctly avowed in the present work.

The point at which the most interest will be manifested, is probably the treatment of the Pentateuch. As has been said, Vatke was one of the first to put the document known as A or Q—the first Elohist—*not earlier* than the captivity. We find, with some surprise, not only that he places his document earlier

* WILHELM VATKE'S HISTORISCH-KRITISCHE EINLEITUNG IN DAS ALTE TESTAMENT. Nach Vorlesungen herausgegeben von Dr. Hermann G. S. Preiss, mit einem Vorwort von Dr. A. Hilgenfeld. Bonn, 1886. 8vo, pp. xviii, 754.

in point of time than Deuteronomy, but that he holds to a new order of the documents. Dillmann, who uses the signs A B C D, supposes this order to represent the relative age of the documents. Wellhausen makes the chronology B C D A, while Vatke now comes in and asserts that it is C A B D. He adds, however, that the time of composition of the three earliest probably falls within the same half century (which he makes to be from 720 to 670 B. C.). One of the supposed surest data for determining the age of Deuteronomy, has been the Book of the Law in the Temple in the time of Josiah. This Book of the Law has been almost uniformly identified with Deuteronomy. Vatke now declares this to be an error, and asserts that *that* book was a composite of the three older documents, while Deuteronomy was not composed till the last decade of the kingdom of Judah (p. 387).

Beyond this, there is little which calls for special remark in the book. The author shows some acquaintance with American literature (p. 266). We are accustomed in such works to more or less ingenious and baseless hypotheses; as that the name יהוה was originally ייחה, or that Ps. LXXII. and Isa. XIX. 16-25 refer to the time of Ptolemy II. These, however, are sparingly used. The author leaves us Moses, believes him, indeed, to be the author of the Decalogue, therefore a monotheist who made religion bear upon the moral life of the people. He supposes the Decalogue to have been given in a briefer form than the present text.

We have found occasional inaccuracies or infelicities of expression. Is it true that all the Semitic dialects have the same method of constructing sentences—that their syntax is similar, in other words? (p. 178). Bleek-Wellhausen does not put Joel under Jeroboam II. (*Welthausen* the name is spelled here, and we have noticed several similar errors, due of course to the proof-reader). The literature is generally brought down to a quite recent date. As Abulwalid's lexicon is mentioned as having been made known by Gesenius and others, it would be well to add that it was published by Neubauer. DeBiberstein Kazimirski appears as Kazimirski de Biberstein. Ugolino's Thesaurus is in thirty-four (not fifty-four) volumes. It is said that Zebulon (instead of Simeon) is not mentioned in Deut. XXXIII.

But it is a thankless task to be making minor criticisms. Accuracy is doubtless more difficult to obtain in a posthumous work than in one which the author himself is permitted to see through the press.

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S. A. SMITH'S KEILSCHRIFTEXTE ASURBANIPALS.*

This volume contains a transliteration of the Asurbanipal text (V R., 1-10), a translation of the same into German, some notes by the author, a few notes by Mr. Pinches, and a vocabulary. For students of Assyrian there is great need of carefully edited texts, with grammatical and philological notes. Such transliter-

* DIE KEILSCHRIFTEXTE ASURBANIPALS, KÖNIGS VON ASSYRIEN (668-626 v. Chr.) nach dem selbst in London copirten Grundtext mit Transcription, Uebersetzung, Kommentar und vollständigem Glossar von Samuel Alden Smith. Heft I. Die Annalen nach dem Cylinder Rⁿ 1. (Vgl. V R. 1-10). Leipzig: Verlag von Eduard Pfeiffer, 1887.